WRL News

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WOMEN TIE UP THE PENTAGON

Women's Pentagon Action on the march. *Photo © Paula Allen.*

Left: Women weaving in front of the door at the north loading dock at the Pentagon. Right: The river entrance of the Pentagon at the end of the day. *Photos © Paula Allen.*

by Susan Pines

On Monday, November 16, 65 women were arrested at the Pentagon. They were part of a larger demonstration of 3500 women who went to the Pentagon, to mourn, to rage and to defy. They came as women and feminists, connecting the oppression of women in their daily lives with the world-wide violence of the military machine.

The demonstration was sponsored by the Women's Pentagon Action (WPA), and followed a similar scenario to last year's action (see WRL News, Jan.-Feb., 1981), and was part of a two-day event.

Sunday was a day to gather, talk to each other in workshops and over literature tables, to share music and to prepare for Monday's demonstration. Unfortunately, the space rented for this Gathering (the Washington Colisseum) was large and unfriendly, and as one participant put it, "just plain ugly." However, the space was transformed for a few short hours, and many good workshops occurred, as did banner and prop-making, and civil disobedience training for Monday's action. In late afternoon, women left the Colisseum for a demonstration at the Washington Mall near the Air and Space Museum (where replicas of the atomic bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki are housed).

On Monday morning, women gathered in DC for a lively march over the Arlington Memorial Bridge during the morning rush hour. Once over the bridge, banners and signs were placed in a truck (to be picked up later at the Pentagon), and the march continued, silently, through Arlington Cemetery, then around three sides of the Pentagon to the parade grounds at the River entrance.

The action at the Pentagon consisted of four stages, each stage signalled by a different "larger than life" puppet. First, the white mourning puppet, accompaned by a slow, constant drum beat, moved around the parade grounds while women placed hundreds of tombstones in the ground to commemorate their sisters who had been victims of individual or state violence.

After the mourning stage, the red rage puppet rose and women's wailing and sorrow

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The Peace Movement, Here and in Europe

by David McReynolds

Originally this was to have been a "divided article," with Michael Randle of England giving a political view of the European movement. For reasons beyond our—or Michael's—control, we did not learn he would be unable to do the piece until it was too late to scout a replacement. Therefore, I will begin with listing three resources which help cover European views. All are available from WRL. The January 1, 1982 issue of *WIN* ($1) has two excellent pieces, one by Peter Jones, the other by Meg Beresford, giving a general roundup of the European movement. The *Nation* issue of January 24, from last year carried E. P. Thompson's now famous *Letter to America*, which gives much of the European rationale for their move to disengage from the nuclear race. The *Nation* of January 16, this year, has a long and provocative piece by two Soviet dissidents, one of whom still lives in Moscow—Roy and Zhores Medvedev—titled *Nuclear Samizdat*. Copies of both issues of the *Nation* are available for $1.25 each issue, including postage.

The European movement was provoked by two things. The first was the obvious—there is no serious danger of Soviet attack on Western Europe. It has been more than 30 years—going back to the Berlin Blockade of 1948—since there was any danger of military engagement between East and West Europe. The European public had not paid much attention to NATO because there seemed little reason to worry about a situation that was stable.

In fact the European public should have worried, because it had become clear in recent years that policy makers in Washington D.C. were thinking in terms of a limited nuclear war with the Soviet Union—a war *limited to the destruction of Europe*. The assumption in Washington was that *if* war did begin, it would begin at the level of "conventional weapons," where the Soviets hold a clear edge, and that to "balance" the Soviet edge in troops and tanks, the NATO forces would use "tactical" nuclear weapons, including the neutron bomb.

Thus the stage was set, several years ago, for a European peace movement to disengage from the two major powers. Economically Western Europe had long since become independent of the United States. A massive effort toward European disarmament had been tried once before—in the late 1950's and early 1960's—but Europe could not yet stand on its own against the United States. Spain and Portugal were still Fascist. Greece was under the shadow of the Colonels. And if one were to write a history of that time, one would need to take into account the great reservoir of good will which the United States still had—the trust in U.S. motives which was not eroded until the Vietnam War.

What shook Europe awake was Reagan. From the day of his election the Europeans began to worry about the consistent policy of "verbal confrontation" displayed by the new Administration. Haig and Weinberger and Reagan seemed determined to blame Moscow for whatever problems the U.S. faced, whether in Indochina, or the Middle East, whether in Central America or Africa. Terrorism became the new issue, and Moscow was alleged to be the center. Reagan began with a pledge to rebuild America's military might, charging that Carter had led us down the road to "unilateral disarmament"(!) Washington rebuffed any suggestions about entering arms limitations talks with the Soviets.

Instead, we were treated to Reagan's sophomoric charge that because the Russians were Marxists they really had no sense of morality. But the rhetoric of confrontation might not have caused the Europeans to take to the streets—the decision on the Neutron Bomb, and the determination to put Cruise and Pershing 2 missiles into Western Europe did. The Soviet SS-20's are very bad weapons, and the Europeans are demonstrating against them, as well as against the U.S. weapons.

But there is a major difference between the U.S. Cruise and Pershing 2 missiles and the Soviet SS-20's—the SS-20's cannot reach the U.S. and therefore are not a threat to America, while the Cruise and Pershing 2 missiles can reach deep into Soviet territory and are, therefore, as threatening to the Soviets as the Soviet missiles in Cuba were to the U.S. back in 1962. There is a second difference. Under the old system there was a kind of "double-key" safeguard, so that *both* U.S. and European NATO forces had to agree to the use of nuclear weapons. The new weapons come much closer to simply being U.S. weapons, under U.S. control, placed in NATO territory. The Soviets are not particularly worried about a French or British or West German first strike—but they do worry about an American first strike. What the U.S. was proposing was a major, unilateral escalation in the arms race, using West Europe as the base.

All the comments that came from Reagan and Haig and Weinberger last year only terrified the Europeans more, and with good reason. Washington confirmed there had been talk of "demonstrating" a nuclear weapon to the Soviets in a crisis—exploding it in some "unpopulated" area in or near Soviet territory. Reagan confirmed the view that Washington felt a "limited" nuclear war could be fought in Europe. Production of the Neutron Bomb was ordered.

And the European movement exploded into the streets. In Scandinavia, in England, in West Germany, in Holland, in Greece, and even in Roumania and Bulgaria. The Labour Party in Great Britain adopted a position of unilateral nuclear disarmament. Helmut Schmidt, the conservative West German leader, began to put some distance between himself and Reagan.

One other major factor helped provide the basis for the absolutely extraordinary movement in West Europe—Poland. Poland is the center of the Warsaw Pact. If Solidarity could exist in Poland, if the power of the Communist Party could be challenged and democracy contemplated, then it was obvious the Warsaw Pact was a paper tiger. If Moscow's armed might could not silence the Polish working class, it certainly posed no threat to the rest of Europe. This was an unstated (and often unconscious) factor in events in Western Europe. And the peace movement in the West helped guarantee the freedom of Poland—for Moscow had to weigh the price of cracking down on Solidarity against the advantages of stopping the U.S. in its dangerous escalation of the nuclear weapons race.

I will not try to evaluate the Polish events here—much needed information is not available. Did the Polish government deliberately seek a confrontation? Did extreme elements in Solidarity seek to disengage Poland from the Eastern Bloc? I do not know. But I do know that Washington was, from the beginning, provocative. Shouting loudly that the Soviets must not intervene, Reagan was almost daring them to cross the line. And he felt he could not lose—if the Soviets did not intervene (and thus far they have not) then Reagan could take credit that his loud voice had saved Poland. And if they did intervene then Reagan could use that as an excuse for U.S. intervention in El Salvador, Nicaragua, even, possibly, Cuba. As it turned out, the Soviets did not directly intervene, but their pressure was certainly decisive in the move to declare Martial law and jail the Solidarity leadership.

I do know that Poland represents a tragedy and a setback. A tragedy for the Polish people, and a setback for the peace movement—Reagan is already using Poland as if it were a club with which to beat people into line. Let us keep some

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David McReynolds is a WRL National staff member.

Local Organizing

by Grace Hedemann

Columbia WRL (reactivated WRL group founded in 1974), and **Citizens for Peace & Social Justice/WRL** are recognized WRL Locals. Joanne Sheehan and Rick Gaumer from *Norwich WRL* had a baby boy, Patrick, in November, while Jeanne Hand and Jozef Boniakowski from **Momnouth County WRL** had a baby girl, Guinnevere, in October. Helen Michalowski, former **WRL/West** staff person, had a baby girl, Jolene, on November 21, 1981. Glenavie and Steve Gulick from **Philadelphia WRL** had a baby girl in December. WRL is having its own "baby boom!"

A number of WRL groups had activities on October 24th Unilateral Disarmament Day. **Pittsburgh WRL** in coalition with Pittsburgh MfS and 15 other groups planned a march and rally. About 250 people marched from the Federal Building, stopped at Rockwell and continued onto a downtown square where another 75-100 joined the group for a rally. Almost 150 people participated in a die-in at the end of the rally. The media gave the event good coverage.

In Wilmington, Ohio, Larry Gara, National Committee member, with 18 other people held a Disarmament Day vigil on October 23rd outside the Wilmington Post Office. The response was mixed, but according to Larry less hostile than usual.

Oak Park WRL held a nuclear disarmament public opinion poll on the coldest and windiest day of the season. The group had a card table outside Marshall Field's on the Mall (large Midwest department store). The survey had one question: Should the United States try unilateral disarmament? Yes or No. Results from 60 respondents were 35 said Yes, and 25 said No.

Evansville WRL held an interesting telephone poll in Evansville last June. The survey followed the CBS Special Series, "The Defense of the United States." The results from 144 respondents were as follows: (1) While 57% thought the military budget should be increased, 55.5% were against cuts in federal programs to fund the increase; (2) 58% thought there should be a freeze on U.S. nuclear weapons, 20% wanted an increase, while 10% believed they should be reduced; (3) 76% were against first strike; (4) 81% opposed the use of nuclear weapons in a small scale war; (5) 83% were against U.S. troops going to El Salvador; and (6) 53% felt more secure with an increase in the military budget, while 39% felt less secure. Evansville WRL held a press conference to announce the results. They received excellent media coverage, made the community aware of their existence, and learned more about the community for future organizing.

Lamoille Peace Coalition/WRL on Solidarity Day (September 19) instead of going to Washington, D.C., collected signatures of support for the demonstration and forwarded them to President Reagan. They choreographed a poem by a local poet written after Three Mile Island entitled, "Litany For Today." They then performed it at a local energy fair. Then at a local fall festival the group painted faces, sold literature and T-shirts to fundraise $57!

Atlanta WRL is working with CALC, AFSC and Georgians Against Nuclear Energy on the Nuclear Freeze Campaign. The group is planning a regular radio show on a neighborhood station, plus TV channel access. In addition they are planning house meetings for self education which will eventually lead to actions against Lockheed. They arranged speaking engagements for a German exchange student at Georgia State University and Emory University on the German peace movement. Members of Atlanta WRL attend a course on nuclear weapons and the history of negotiations. The group has selected as their main focus for education the relationship between the military budget and the cuts in social programs. They will be working in coalition with Georgians for a Fair Budget, Christians Against Hunger, and the Welfare Rights Organization. As Adele Kushner said, "Who knows, with Andrew Young as Mayor, the group may even get official support." Steve Sumerford, WRL/SE staff, spoke recently at Georgia State University, Emory University, and Georgia Tech on behalf of Atlanta WRL. The local Tax Conversion Fund is doing quite well and will make grants in December.

Monmouth County WRL leafletted the New Jersey Education Association Teacher's Convention in Atlantic City again this year. Over 10,000 leaflets were distributed to teachers on the boardwalk entering the convention hall. The leaflet's theme emphasized teachers' responsibility to offer alternative choices to the military and war to young people. The leaflet also listed non-sexist, non-racist, and non-violent books for children of all ages. The group found the teachers very receptive. Monmouth County WRL members join the Shrewsbury Friends silent vigil for peace every 1st and 3rd Sunday from 12 noon to 1 pm. All WRL members are invited to join the vigil. For more information, contact Monmouth County WRL.

Birmingham WRL on Veterans Day picketed the "World Peace Luncheon" organized annually by the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. was honored. Those attending included

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Disarmament Day vigil in Wilmington, Ohio. *Photo by Larra Gara.*

Grace Hedemann is a WRL National staff member.

Local Organizing

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the Secretary of the Army, a General from the National Guard/Reserves, and a Rear Admiral who is Chief Chaplain of the Navy. As Sterling Lynn said, "It was a super feeling to go up against those yahoos." Following the picket, the group leafletted high schoolers at the Veterans Day Parade about resisting the draft and alternatives to registering. Members of the local Catholic Peace group camped out across from the reviewing stand with a giant banner quoting Pope Paul VI—No More War, Never Again War. People in the reviewing stand faced the banner for the entire three hour parade.

Birmingham WRL is currently organizing a state-wide network to provide support for resisters and their families. Responses from churches, activists, and others has been good. "Very few resisters in the South have made their resistance public," Sterling said. "In fact, I know one young man from Mississippi whose parents turned him in for not registering." The group has tried to get into high schools to speak against JROTC, but has been unsuccessful against the lobbying by the VFW, American Legion and others. Birmingham has plans to greet Jerry Falwell when he comes to town.

Foothills WRL as an active member of the Rocky Flats Coalition conducted peacekeeping training workshops and provided peacekeepers and team coordinators for the April '81 Rocky Flats Rally. The group was instrumental in getting speakers for the rally, including Jerry Gordon from the Coalition for Safe Energy and Full Employment. The group's credibility is steadily increasing among the peace network in Colorado. They sponsored and helped plan the "Securing Our Future" Conference in Denver last spring. Again, the group secured speakers including Dick Greenwood from the International Association of Machinists.

Foothills organized a well attended Hiroshima Day service at a local Catholic Church, and cosponsored other events in Ft. Collins and elsewhere in the state the same day. Then the group brought Dr. Joanna Rogers Macy to Ft. Collins for a workshop on "Dealing With Despair in the Nuclear Age." The event attracted many new faces and a front page story in the college newspaper. The group continues to work in coalition with local and Denver based peace, social justice and anti-nuclear organizations. Future plans include a speaker series at Colorado State University and within the community on the draft, military tax resistance and so forth.

New Brunswick WRL every Friday for five months has leafletted workers from the local General Dynamics plant. Janet Jones says, "It's in a very small town, plastered with KKK graffiti, so the people weren't exactly receptive to us." However, more and more workers are taking leaflets (from originally 4 to 80) with fewer obscene remarks. The group has an ongoing film series on disarmament, nuclear power, El Salvador, Grenada, South Africa, etc. The Local helped organize a clergy group, Emergency Alliance Against War, which will be working on the issues of disarmament, tax resistance and the draft.

In the future New Brunswick WRL hopes to start a peace center. In addition the group plans to work with community people on the issue of racism and its effects in the community. Johnson and Johnson owns most of New Brunswick. The corporation is revitalizing the area and effectively eliminating all low-cost housing. They also invest in South Africa.

Most New Brunswick WRL members are no longer students, but New Brunswick is a university town. As a result the Local protests militarism on the campus. Rutgers University President recently appeared before the Armed Services Committee asking for more military research contracts, and there are two ROTC units on campus. The Local has developed theatre to perform when military recruiters set up displays along side WRL literature tables. The group will be vigiling at a prominent community Army recruiting station soon.

Southern California WRL is reorganizing after a founding member moved to Santa Cruz. They are in the process of determining if they can make a unique contribution to peace in the Los Angeles area. **Philadelphia WRL** with Philadelphia WTR will be forming a support group for tax resisters. Recently, Steve Gulick and others from Philadelphia WRL gave women leaving for the Women's Pentagon Action a wonderful sendoff by presenting a bouquet of roses and fresh baked bread.

WRL/West in conjunction with other women's groups organized a Women's Action at the Bohemian Club (whose all male membership includes our country's military, industrial and governmental elite) on November 15 in the Bay Area. The action was inspired by the Women's Pentagon Action last year and was timed to coincide with the 1981 event. Workshops and discussions were held on November 14 and the gathering followed at the Club on the 15th. Tombstones were planted in the ivy and a web was woven across the front door. Over two hundred women participated.

Draft Registration Update

President Reagan announced on January 7, 1982, the continuation of draft registration. He based his decision on the recommendation of the Presidential Military Manpower Task Force chaired by Defense Secretary Weinberger. According to the report, draft registration could save the United States as much as six weeks in mobilizing emergency manpower. Yet, former Selective Service Director, Bernard Rostker, during the Carter Administration, said that draft registration without examination and classification would save the U.S. little time in manpower procurement.

Presidential Advisor Meese said that a 30 to 60 day grace period would be given to potential violators, and then prosecution would proceed. At this time various U.S. Attorney offices around the country have 157 cases before them. On December 9th the Justice Department ordered U.S. Attorneys to temporarily suspend efforts to indict until the White House made a decision about the continuation of the registration program. In fact, a U.S. Attorney in Minneapolis had informed Scott Aaseng, a public resister, that a sealed indictment from the Minneapolis grand jury would be served on December 11th. With the Justice Department's order, the indictment was not served on Aaseng. Nevertheless, demonstrations were held around the country on December 12th to protest the continuation of registration and to demand President Reagan end the program.

A new twist is "constructive registration." In November Rusty Martin from Cedar Falls, Iowa, was informed by the U.S. Attorney from the Northern district of Iowa that He had been registered by the government from information gleaned from his FBI file. Martin protested this action in writing to Selective Service and the U.S. Attorney, and now according to an article in the *Washington Post*, the Justice Department and Selective Service may not recognize involuntary registration either. Peter Goldberger, a member of the Military Law Task Force of the National Lawyers Guild, proposes that "constructive registration" could be used as a possible successful defense for nonregistrants (*On Watch*, December, 1981).

It is clear that the large number of nonregistrants (an estimated 800,000 to 1 million) was the chief reason President Reagan hesitated making his decision. The Administration is gambling on the hope that most of the nonregistrants will discontinue their resistance and will sign up. Otherwise, the legitimacy of the registration will be undermined or the Justice Department will be crippled prosecuting an impossible number of cases.

The peace movement must rally behind the nonregistrants. We must encourage continued resistance and support the young men that face prosecution.

Spring/Summer 1982 TIMELINE

February

18–19 **Fair Budget Action Campaign Conference** in Washington, D.C. For more information 202/331-2400.

19–21 **Second Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign Conference** in Denver, CO. For more information 314/533-1169.

26–27 **Political Art Documentation/Distribution:** An Inaugural Event. Workshops, performances, and strategy sessions in New York City. For more information 212/925-0325.

28 **Cultural Event & Photo Exhibit for a Nuclear Free Pacific** in the San Francisco Bay Area. Contact the Pacific Life Community 415/849-2360.

March

1–7 **Nuclear Free Pacific Week.** Scheduled events for Northern California—March 1: San Jose 408/248-1815; March 2: Nuclear Free Pacific Evening at La Peña Cultural Center in Berkeley with Peter Jones and a Belauan. Scheduled events for Hawaii—March 1–7: Symposium on Nuclear Weapons, Symposium on Micronesia, and Pacific Conference of Churches Conference. Contact the Pacific Concerns Resource Center 808/538-3522.

5–7 **WRL/FOR Dallas Regional Conference** and Retreat at Lake Texhoma. For more information 214/370-3805.

8 **International Women's Day.** Women's activities organized by local and international groups.

21–April 4 **National Anti-Apartheid Campaign.** Decentralized activities coordinated by the American Committee on Africa and others. For more information 212/962-1210.

April

15 **War tax resistance demonstrations** organized by local peace groups throughout the country including WRL Locals.

17 **Christian Conscience and the Nuclear Age** organized by the New England Catholic Peace Fellowship at Springfield College in Springfield, MA. For more information 413/532-5541.

17–25 **National Peoples' Congress** initiated by the Grey Panthers and sponsored by numerous organizations. A simulated Congress with elected representatives will pass alternative human rights bills to the Reagan Congress. In Washington, D.C. For more information 212/865-6170.

18–25 **Ground Zero Week.** Series of activities including forums, debates, runs, film series dramatizing the threat of nuclear war, and possible solutions—a nonpartisan, educational event organized by Ground Zero, Union of Concerned Scientists, Physicians for Social Responsibility, various labor and church organizations. For more information 202/638-7402.

May

12–15 **Dewey Canyon IV.** Demonstrations and lobbying in Washington, D.C. organized by the Vietnam Veterans Against the War for veteran rights, benefits, and against war. For more information 312/275-0043; 989-4684.

28–30 **Peace Sabbath** (in the United States) and Choose Life Weekend (internationally). Prayer, vigiling and fasting in preparation for the Special U.N. Session on Disarmament. For more information contact the Religious Task Force of the Campaign for the Second U.N. Special Session on Disarmament 212/858-6882.

29 (or June 5) **Savannah River Plant** mass action in Aiken, South Carolina coordinated by the Natural Guard. For more information 803/254-9398.

30 **Leadership Conference of Women Religious National Demonstration Against the Arms Race** in Washington, D.C. For more information 202/293-1483.

June

7- July 9 **United Nations Second Special Session on Disarmament** in New York City. There are a series of activities being organized by the Campaign for the Second U.N. Special Session on Disarmament as well as some special events by individual organizations. Unless indicated by the event listing, contact the Campaign office (212/673-1808) located in New York, NY for more information.

Plowshare Coffee House at 777 UN Plaza, NYC. For more information 914/358-4601.

7–9 **International Confederation for Disarmament and Peace (ICDP) Conference for Non-Aligned Countries.** For more information contact David McReynolds 212/228-0450.

8–10 **International Religious Conference** coordinated by the Religious Task Force and Temple of Understanding. For more information 212/858-6882.

11 **International Religious Convocation.** For more information 212/858-6882. In addition there will be a Witness for Survival event sometime during the Special Session with date and place to be set.

12 **Disarmament Rally in Central Park.**

14 **Civil Disobedience at the U.S. Mission to the U.N.**

21–27 **National Gay Pride Week,** culminating with National Gay Pride Day. Local activities around the country. For more information contact National Gay Task Force 212/741-5800.

24–July 8 **WRL Organizer's Training Program** in Deerfield, MA, and New York City. For more information 212/228-0450.

July

25–27 **War Resisters' International (WRI) Triennial** in Spoleto, Italy. For more information, write WRI, 55 Dawes Street, London SE 17 1EL, England.

August

6–9 **Hiroshima/Nagasaki Commemorative Events** throughout the country organized by local peace groups including WRL Locals.

13–15 **WRL/Southeast Regional Conference.** For more information 919/682-6374.

16–22 **WRL/Southeast Organizer's Training Program.** For more information 919/682-6374.

mid-Aug. **Women's Music Festival in Michigan.** Date set by early summer. For more information 212/989-7963 Womanews.

This TIMELINE presents national and regional events for the coming months. As we go to press, a number of dates for national activities had not been set. If we have omitted a major event, please send us the information.

Mobilization for Survival National Conference

by John Miller

Over 250 activists gathered in Milwaukee over the December 4 weekend at the 5th National Conference of the Mobilization for Survival (MFS). National Mobe has been through a rough year, but if this conference is any indication, MFS's future looks bright.

Staff turnover, an office move, financial and other problems meant a low profile for MFS through most of 1981. Even with the problems, MFS was able to put major effort into mobilizing for the March 28 Labor march on Harrisburg and the May 3 march on Washington, as well as help launch the National Jobs with Peace Network. The number of groups affiliated with MFS is growing and most are strong and active.

MFS continued to emphasize the connections between nuclear power and weapons, disarmament and human needs. MFS was also instrumental in initiating the coalition organizing the demonstrations at the upcoming UN Special Session on Disarmament. The conference reemphasized Special Session work as the highest priority for Mobe.

The conference also reaffirmed Mobe's commitment to its goals to "ban nuclear power and meet human needs." (The other goals are "Zero Nuclear Weapons" and "Reverse the Arms Race.") Some fear these might be lost in the surge of disarmament activity.

On the nuclear power issue MFS is assisting in outreach and publicity for upcoming actions at Three Mile Island. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will soon approve the restart of the undamaged Unit 1 reactor at TMI, and local groups are planning civil disobedience and other actions. With the Reagan Administration determined to boost nuclear power, MFS can also provide a crucial forum for discussing strategy and coordinating action in the anti-nuclear movement.

The human needs goal will get a boost from a newly-formed task force that will suggest concrete ways local affiliates can integrate human needs organizing with anti-nuclear and disarmament work. MFS will continue to encourage Jobs with Peace campaigns and is assisting with the National People's Congress scheduled for April 17-25. Finally, MFS will sponsor a national meet human needs week next fall. This probably will take the form of local activities that highlight the connection between peace and human needs issues.

A major dilemma confronting MFS over the past year was the drifting away of several key national peace groups (including CALC, AFSC, FOR) from MFS. Why they pulled back from Mobe is a matter of dispute. Some of the groups felt that MFS was beginning to act more like a competing organization than the coalition it was intended to be. Local organizations taking a greater role in decision-making, the demands of their own programs and the groups' not wanting to get caught up in MFS's internal problems are other possible factors. To WRL's credit, it continued to play an active role in MFS and initiated meetings with the other groups about their concerns.

Without discussing the issue of national groups directly, the conference, by its decisions affirmed that MFS should serve primarily as a network for its member groups, though many feel MFS needs some major project of its own to remain visible and vital. MFS's timeline for the coming year is made up primarily of programs from constituent groups.

MFS also plans to help exchange materials between member groups. Local groups rarely see materials, beyond an occasional newsletter, that other local groups produce. MFS believes that this regular sharing of materials will stimulate local organizing and add to the effectiveness of our movement.

With the Reagan administration making the connections between MFS goals every day on the front page of the newspaper, the conference participants felt that the need for a coalition like MFS is clear.

The conference provided a place for local organizers—most of them not affiliated with any national peace group—to share ex-periences and to plan some common responses to the callousness in Washington. Ideally, MFS can be doing this year round with local and national groups and national campaigns sharing together.

John Miller is on the staff of WIN Magazine.

Remembering A. J. Muste

January 8, 1915 - February 11, 1967

It has been 15 years since the death of A. J. Muste, and the legacy he left—a fierce and unwavering commitment to nonviolence, disarmament, and social and economic justice—has taken on new importance in the last year.

The A. J. Muste Memorial Institute has taken its goals from the man whose name it bears. To help realize them, the Institute has, for the last eight years, supported organizations and projects working for social change. Their activities have ranged from feminist theatre productions in New York to the publication of a resource book on nonviolence in New Zealand. Currently, of course, the efforts of Institute grantees are devoted to offsetting the disastrous effects of Reagan Administration policies—draconian cuts in social services, a rollback in the civil rights commitment, and the sharp rise in the military budget.

The Institute has other projects besides the grants program. It owns and operates the "peace pentagon" in New York City, which is the home of ten social change groups, including the War Resisters League. The community atmosphere in the building fosters a creative working atmosphere, and many of the tenants would be unlikely to survive if they had to pay commercial rents.

The first three issues of the Institute pamphlet series were produced recently. They are: three pieces by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. ("Loving Your Enemies," "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," and "Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam"); "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience" by Henry David Thoreau; and "On Revolution and Equilibrium" by Barbara Deming. Efforts are being made to circulate these as widely as possible, and the Institute would appreciate suggestions. The pamphlets are $1 each, and discounts are available for bulk orders. Additional essays by pacifist writers will be released this year.

William Douthard

There is another sad anniversary in January for the Muste Institute and WRL. It was just a year ago that William Douthard died suddenly at only 34 years old. William was a dedicated and energetic member of the boards of both organizations. His special concerns were racism and economic justice, and his work in these areas formed the basis of several WRL and Institute programs. As with A. J. Muste, William's commitment is a powerful legacy—one which we'll need to draw on heavily as the full impact of Reagan's policies against the poor and minorities becomes manifest.

Wendy Schwartz
Executive Director, AJMMI

Contributions to the A. J. Muste Memorial Institute are tax-deductible. They, and orders for the pamphlets, can be sent to the Institute at 399 Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y. 10012.

The Peace Movement

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things in mind. The most important of which is that at no point during the last year did Reagan do one thing which would have been helpful—tell the Soviets that his interest in the right of self-determination for the Polish people was so great that he was prepared to abandon plans to put new missiles in Europe, and to give some indication that he realized the developments in Poland were so remarkable that they required some equally remarkable response from NATO in terms of moving toward a general cut in the military levels of both NATO and Warsaw Pact forces. But Reagan chose instead to sit back and wait, and hope for a Soviet intervention which would then justify the hard military line from Washington.

Obviously pacifists support the rights of workers to organize and strike, and oppose martial law. But what an irony for Reagan, who crushed the Air Traffic Controllers Strike with the full power of the State, to appear now as the champion of labor! And what an obscenity for the Administration to equate the situation in Poland, where repression has been brutal but limited, with the terror raging in Central America. How can one respect a political leader who bemoans repression in an area where he can do nothing, but condones slaughter in an area under his control!

Meanwhile...in the United States we see a peace movement reviving, but one that is vastly different from that in Western Europe. The European movement is unilateral and seeks to disengage Europe from the two super powers. The movement in the United States is developing *within* one of the super powers and cannot "disengage" from them—nor is unilateral disarmament the basis at this time for a mass movement (though it is a position I believe in and advocate—I simply differentiate here between what I think is desirable and what is possible at this time). In some ways the American movement, which centers primarily around the Freeze campaign, is a step backward, away from disarmament and toward some form of "arms control." The strength of the Freeze campaign is that it does appeal to many Americans—it is "bi-lateral," it seems "free of risk," and it can be a useful handle for local work. The weaknesses of the Freeze campaign are less obvious but very real. Coming at a time of massive and rising unemployment and social distress the Freeze campaign has very little say about shifting funds from military to social use, or about direct government intervention to create jobs. It is not a campaign which has much appeal to trade unions, minorities, or the unemployed. It has sought to build a wide base by limiting the issues it would tackle. My sense is that as America finds itself sinking into an economic disaster, the Freeze campaign will need to "radicalize" its image in order to remain relevent. There is a serious problem with the Freeze approach—or *any* approach—which suggests there is no risk involved. Disarmament involves both trust and risk. Nothing as radical as ending the arms race can be achieved without quite major risks. But in fairness I think pacifists must take the risk of working in "less than perfect" coalitions, and of remembering that the forces working for a Freeze may be wrong at some points but they are our friends and allies at all points. The question is simply how do we discuss our disagreements—while working together.

And one of those disagreements is stated most effectively by the Asian and European peace movements, who point out that if we do no more than "freeze" the weapons at the present level, that means leaving *our* nuclear warheads on *their* territory!

Finally a brief word on Reagan's speech calling for a "zero option" on all missiles and weapons in Europe. Did this represent any kind of breakthrough? What comfort can we take from the current U.S./Soviet disarmament talks that have resumed in Geneva? On Reagan's speech I think three things must be said. First, Reagan's "zero" option was in itself loaded—he left out of his equation French and British weapons, and also those U.S. weapons carried on submarines, etc., while including all Soviet weapons now targeted on Europe. What Reagan was doing, after denouncing any form of unilateral disarmament for the U.S., was urging just such a course on the Soviet Union. Second, there was about the Reagan proposal a transparent effort to silence the European movement which had fianally, in the most massive demonstrations in Western Europe in more than a generation, shaken Reagan's advisors awake. Reagan almost conceded that his speech was only a propaganda ploy when, in a TV interview with the right-wing commentator, Ben Wattenberg, he first accused the demonstrations of having been masterminded by the World Peace Council (which is, in fact, a group set up by the Soviet Union some years ago—on that point Reagan was correct). He then went on to note that since he had made his speech there were fewer demonstrators in the cities of West Europe. He also made a comment which revealed the gap between the Reagan White House and social reality. He said of the monumental demonstrations in Europe "Oh those, those could have been film clips from the sixties"—the implication being that people respond in a mechanical way to buttons pressed by Moscow. Of course the European Communists are involved in the campaigns—not only because Moscow might wish it, but because Communists are as worried as anyone else about seeing Europe shattered by nuclear war. Reagan does not seem to understand that the massive demonstrations of the sixties—or today—cannot be "turned on and off" from *any* political center, but reflect very deep feelings and occur because of a social crisis which cannot be resolved with one good speech. Third, one must be something of a cynic that Reagan made his speech only *after* the demonstrations, and in response to them. We have yet no evidence that the Administration is prepared for any major reversal of its current policy of confrontation with the Soviets.

As for the talks in Geneva I would be very skeptical. I think the Russians are almost as uneasy as Reagan with street demonstrations. They had their fill of this in Poland, and I doubt that the hundreds of thousands demonstrating in Bulgaria and Roumania who called for both the SS-20's and the U.S. missiles to be taken out were any comfort to Moscow. Historically Moscow—and Washington—prefer to settle issues behind closed doors. In this case the movement for disarmament, far from being under Moscow's control, as Reagan believes, is "out of control" and both major powers will seek, through the Geneva talks, to calm the public. I believe we will see a steady stream of press statements that "positive progress is reported...U.S. and Soviet officials shook hands warmly today as they left the meeting...Moscow reports some optimism...Washington reports reason to hope for progress, etc." All of this we have seen before. What we need is a focus for setting our demands out clearly, and urging specific dates for action—and that focus is the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament. And the UN Special Session is important not because there is any reason to believe the UN will, on its own, achieve anything. No, it is important for two simple reasons. First, it lifts the issue of disarmament out of the "two power" context and makes it what it truly is, a *world* issue in which *all* people have a stake and must have a voice. And second, because the Special Session is an occasion for us to make clear, specific demands for total and complete disarmament.

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Women's Pentagon Action

Continued from page 1

gave way to expressions of anger, yelling and chanting, "No More War," and "We Will Stop You."

The yellow puppet then came forward, signalling the beginning of the empowerment stage. The puppets led the women out of the Parade grounds to encircle the Pentagon. As they walked, women wove a continuous braid, which was left, encircling the entire Pentagon.

As the defiance stage began, signalled by the black puppet, affinity groups blocked entrances to the Pentagon, many women weaving a web of brightly colored yarn across the doorways.

In describing this civil disobedience action to others I know that I've had difficulty conveying the power and drama of it. But the simplicity of this action, and the tenacity of the weavers, as police cut their weaving or took balls of yarn away from them, and as they started reweaving strands together, or reached into their pockets to pull out new balls of yarn, was an incredibly empowering act, as much so to the observers as to the participants.

At the end of the day 65 women were in custody. Sixty-two women were charged with obstruction of entrances and three were charged with defacement of federal property for marking the entrance of the building with blood. This year, in an effort to spread out court appearances, and avoid publicity, officials offered the demonstrators citations, with future dates to return to court. Most women refused these citations and insisted on arraignment that night.

Procedure at Federal Magistrate's Court that night was odd. Two of the three magistrates women appeared before refused to accept pleas that night. Many women would have preferred to enter pleas of "no contest" or "guilty" that night and be sentenced immediately, but instead were given dates to return to court. In protest to this, many women refused to give their names and were held over as Jane Doe's. One Magistrate did accept pleas and some women were sentenced to 10 days in jail that night. Many other women refused to post bail, and at the end of the evening 43 women were sent to the Arlington County Jail.

In later trials, women who were found guilty were sentenced to either 10 or 30 days (30 days for second time offenders, the maximum possible sentence for the change). Originally all were held in Arlington Jail, but on the day before Thanksgiving nine women were transferred to Alderson Federal Prison in West Virginia. Five of those women, who had only five days left to serve, were held in solitary confinement until their release. The other four were put into the general population for the remainder of their sentences. Two women who were sentenced to 30 days were sent to the Metropolitan Correctional Institute in New York City. On December 24, by order of the court, all women still in prison because of the Women's Pentagon Action were released and all charges still pending were dropped.

In a statement written from jail and endorsed by many of the women who participated in the CD action at the Pentagon, Nesta King explained, "...we went to the Pentagon in an action which embodies our resistance to coercive authority...The every day oppression of living in an increasingly authoritarian militarized society is...a feminist concern. In jail we're talking for hours every day about feminism and nonviolence, forms of resistance and the various paths of noncooperation...We want to see all these issues dicussed widely in our movement. Many of us aren't yet clear on the many dimensions, but we believe that it is essential that we resist, directly. And we believe that feminist women acting together have a special possibility of seeing what's wrong and developing the forms of nonhierarchical cooperative direct action and civil disobedience which might help save our planet and usher in a free feminist future. That's why they put us here."

And the Women's Pentagon Action is doing just that. Meetings since the demonstration in November have attracted many women who have been moved to action by the vision so the Women's Pentagon Action. A recent discussion on "Feminism, Nonviolence and Civil Disobedience" in New York City attracted over 50 women. Local Women's Pentagon Action groups are now working out campaigns and strategies for their own areas, as well as working out an ongoing structure for the entire network. To get in touch with the Women's Pentagon Action, or for more information, write the WPA Clearinghouse, 3601 Locust Walk, Philadelphia, PA 19104, or the WPA, 339 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012.

Susan Pines is a WRL National staff member.

WRL Statement of Purpose

The War Resisters League affirms that war is a crime against humanity. We therefore are determined not to support any kind of war, international or civil, and to strive nonviolently for the removal of all the causes of war.

I support this statement and wish to enroll as a member of the War Resisters League.

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